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ABSTRACT

Scholars and political commentators have noted a new movement toward direct citizen participation in the candidate nomination process, and some individuals have seen this as a decline of the political parties. This paper examines two concepts: (1) the origins of the argument about participation and strong political parties and (2) the effects of citizen participation on political parties. Progressive reforms were instituted in the early twentieth century and included the direct primary; the initiative, referendum, and recall; and nonpartisan elections at the local levels. Some scholars argue that the effect of these reforms has been to weaken political parties and to perpetuate mutual exclusivity between citizen participation and party government. Others hold the view that there is no realistic alternative to a middle of the road position since some form of participatory citizen effort is required either by legislation or regulation. They propose the fusing of citizen participation with the political parties to strengthen the parties. They also call for a citizen assembly to give continued input into the platforms parties adopt. They conclude that without significant involvement of the people, political parties will continue to decline in electoral influence. (NL)

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND EFFECTIVE POLITICAL PARTIES: MUTUAL EXCLUSIVITY OR NECESSARY INTERDEPENDENCE?

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In American Political Science literature, it has become axiomatic that political parties have declined in electoral influence. Gone are the days of the old city party machines of Bosses Plunkett, Daley and Rizzo along with their consequent party nomination deals in the proverbial smoke-filled back rooms.

Scholars and political commentators have noted the new movement toward direct participation of the people in the political candidate nomination process. Many have been critical of this movement for it seems to imply the decline of American political parties. Indeed, according to this analysis, political parties have suffered since the inception of the Progressive Reform Movement at the turn of this century. Progressive, "populist" devices such as the initiative, referendum and recall, and especially the direct primary have combined to weaken political parties and perhaps render them relics of a past age.[1] A few scholars advocate a reduction in the use of these devices as a first step toward party regeneration. It should be noted that the type of political participation fostered by these Progressive reforms emphasizes citizen impact upon electoral politics in contradistinction to the type of strong citizen participation emphasizing enlightened and informed debate complete with education functions. We will have more to say about this latter more meaningful form of participation later.

What seems implicit in contemporary party literature is the argument that we can have either strong citizen participation or strong parties but not both. This remains a rather curious belief since Thomas Jefferson, whom many cite as the founder of American

political parties, fervently believed in the right of citizens to participate in the decisions that would affect them. This would be accomplished via regular meetings in the context of what he termed ward republics.[2]

In this essay, we will first examine the claims concerning Progressive citizen initiatives and their effect upon political parties. Second, we will discuss the origins of the mutual exclusivity argument between citizen participation and strong political parties. Finally, we will challenge this argument largely by proposing a method aimed at fusing citizen participation with strengthened parties.

Progressive Reforms

The list of reforms attributed to the turn-of-the century Progressives is a long one. Some of the measures were economic, such as control of street railways by cities, new taxes and regulations in the states and support for tariffs nationally.[3] Perhaps the most enduring reforms had the greatest effect upon political parties.

V. O. Key's list of progressive reforms related to political parties is instructive. He indicated a variety of motivations behind the changes.

> That movement, whose temper is difficult to reconstruct, was a mixture of economic discontent, of middle-class protest against plutocratic influences, and of moral and religious fervor, as well as of more than a trace of sectionalism. It

denounced special privilege and bossism, and fought popular rule.[4]

His list included the direct primary, the initiative and referendum, direct election of Senators and urban political reform.[5]

Other students of the progressive era have added to the list numerous other demands for change in government and in political party activity. These demands include civil service instead of patronage, regulation of the operation of parties, registration of voters, women's suffrage, dropping partisan designations in local elections, and adoption of the office-block ballot.[6]

Heading nearly every observer's list of progressive action that has affected political parties is the direct primary as a replacement for the convention as a nominating device. The aim in adopting the direct primary was "to substitute the party electorate for the party organization as the nominator."[7]

The effect of the use of the direct primary has been otherwise. Austin Ranney suggests that the direct primary has removed not only boss control but also party control of the nomination process.[8] While the weakening of party control has depended upon both a state's formulation of the direct primary nominating system and the extent of the state party leadership's ability to act within that legal framework, the overall effect of the direct primary is to weaken the party "as organization."[9]

Frank Sorauf maintains that the advocates of the primary "succeeded in multiplying the party oligarchies rather than in

democratizing them."[10] This is accomplished through shifting control to nonparty actors and individual candidates.[11] Since the party must control the nominating process in order to be effective in its major task of electing persons to office, the role of the political party has been reduced by the advent of primaries.[12] With the opening of the nomination role to persons who have little affiliation or loyalty to the party, the political party is little more than a sponsor rather than an actor in the process of candidate selection.

The perception of the party in the minds of citizens is not enhanced by the direct primary. Not only is the effectiveness of the party reduced, but its representativeness also suffers. Persons on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale tend to play a lesser role, permitting the higher status individuals to engage in what amounts to "stuffing the ballot box."[13] Voters and citizens contemplating voting find it difficult to identify with the political party that they cannot see acting in their behalf. Still worse, voters can barely see the party acting in any fashion during the nomination process in direct primary situations.

In order to render the parties more effective and active, a respected student of parties has recommended that the parties choose the nominating method, with the caucus and convention preferred. If the direct primary is retained, he suggests the closed rather than the open version with the preprimary endorsement of party-favored candidates by a party convention.[14]

The initiative, referendum and recall have taken their toll

on the importance of political parties. These devices were designed to permit a larger role for the individual citizens in deciding important issues. Various factors have reduced this democratizing effect, such as the often low turnout in referenda elections.[15] Although these devices have not competed with political parties as extensively as has the direct primary, the use of statewide initiatives is increasing in the 1980s. With the growth of the initiative, an "initiative industry" has risen to perform the tasks necessary to place measures on the ballot. The professionals in this industry are experts in the use of direct mail, polling and media.[16]

With the growth of the initiative, the political party has been surpassed by as a policy facilitator. Issues of party interest are often the very ones that are accomplished through the initiative; these include matters of health, welfare, housing, revenues and taxes.[17] With the rising costs of the initiative process, the democratic nature of the activity is reduced for the use of the process is restricted to groups with significant financial resources, thus effectively eliminating the citizen of below-average means.

The Progressive reformers reduced the effectiveness of political parties from the selection process of a host of elective and appointive offices. Examples include changes brought about by the direct election of Senators, elimination of political party designations in local elections and the civil service movement.

Much has been written on each of these changes. An

illustration of the problems created by these reforms is the mitigation of overt party activity at the local government level. Many municipal elections are held without the inclusion of party labels on the ballot. The advent of the professional city manager reduced the role and party position of the elected mayor.

Because local government nonpartisanship occurs at the lowest level, the opportunity is removed for citizens to be involved in the initial level of the political party process, the level closest to the ordinary person. The educational value of joining the process, learning party skills, and being exposed to party procedures at this less sophisticated and less threatening stage is missing. Further, the opportunity to recruit party officeholders and allow them to run for local office before representing larger constituencies is less available.

The Progressive reformers have gone over, around and under political parties in their efforts to open the political process to more participants. In doing so, they have enhanced the quantity of persons who are admitted to the game; however, the composition of these participants has not fulfilled the expectations of the reformers. Further, the quality of participation has suffered with the decline in political party strength.

As the preceding analysis has illustrated, mechanisms that have increased citizen input to either the political party candidate nomination and selection process or more broadly to government policy formulation are linked to the decline in the strength of political parties. This belief highlights the dilemma

of mutual exclusivity between citizen participation and strong political parties. However, are these two ideas really mutually exclusive? Where might the genesis of such thinking lay? Might it be possible to fuse these two seemingly contradictory ideas and if so, how? These are the questions to which we now turn?

The Origins of Mutual Exclusivity: Federalists and Antifederalists

The genesis of the mutual exclusivity argument can be traced to the Constitutional ratification debates. Much has been written about the republican nature of our Constitution and the elements of the elite consensus at Philadelphia.[18] The Founders' antipathy to mass participation and direct democracy was noted by James Madison when he stated, ". . . Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob."[19] Roger Sherman echoed this sentiment by remarking, ". . . The people should have as little to do as may be about the government. They want information and are constantly liabled to be mislead.[20] Hamilton's aristocratic views led to an even more strident view concerning widespread citizen participation.[21] Indeed, the Founders constructed elaborate filtering devices between the people and their government: the electoral college, election of senators via state legislatures, a rather small House of Representatives which might, in the beginning, ensure rule by the privileged classes and the failure to deal with the restrictive property qualifications attached to the franchise at the Constitutional Convention. Their

purpose was the protection of private property from the type of revolt illustrated by Shay's Rebellion. With this, they believed, would come stability. As Dolbeare and Medcalf argue with respect to Hamilton:

> Inherent in Hamilton's grand design is a set of political implications with profound importance. He created an intricate central government machine that encouraged and rewarded behavior appropriate to his vision of a national-commercial-financial-industrial economy -- the entrepreneurial, productive, growth-oriented behavior that was to define our economic, political, and cultural life and identity for centuries. . . .
>
> Hamilton also insulated the machine against the possibility that popular majorities or political chicanery might alter the outcomes he deemed essential to the creation of a great nation. In the process, by building upon the dark side of the Constitution, the Framers' property protecting provisions and fear of democracy, Hamilton succeeded in almost completely removing the substance of public policy from popular hands. . . .[22]

Madison reflected Hamilton's thoughts concerning collective meetings of the people by remarking that, ". . . Ignorance will be the dupe of cunning and passion the slave of sophistry and declamation."[23] Thus, the Founders desired a strict republican form of government which would be ruled by the wisdom inherent in men associated with the privileged classes.

While the Constitution does not mention political parties, they quickly emerged not only as electoral institutions but as institutions for the transmission of popular will into government policy. It is possible to view these institutions as additional filtering devices between the people and their government so necessary to the Founders' republican ideas. As a result, political parties were more republican and representative in nature and not strictly participatory. Contemporary arguments aimed at reestablishing strong political parties stress the intermediary role of such institutions.[24] The argument for strong and hence elite republican institutions like political parties, among others, was entrenched in our national psyche during the Constitution ratification debates. These ideas, however, were not the only ones debated during the ratification period.

Antifederalist ideas concerning the nature of our republic were also extremely important. If we can generally characterize the Founders' ideas of government as elite and republican in nature, then we can surely characterize Antifederalist notions as more democratic. As Gordon Wood has observed:

> . . . The Antifederalists thus came to oppose the new national government for the same reasons the Federalists favored it: because its very structure and detachment from the people would work to exclude any kind of actual and local interest representation and prevent those who were not rich, well born, or prominent from exercising political power. Both sides fully appreciated the central issue the Constitution posed and

> grappled with it throughout the debates: whether a professedly popular government should actually be in the hands of, rather than simply derived from, common ordinary people.[25]

There are a number of important elements comprising the Antifederalist argument.

First, most Antifederalists resented the secrecy surrounding the Constitutional Convention. Some compared the pledges of secrecy to the chains of despotism. Thus, secrecy was seen by some as a calculated attempt to keep information from the people.[26]

Second, Antifederalists objected to the idea that wisdom resides in the natural aristocracy instead of the people. The minority delegation to the Philadelphia Convention, for example, resented the influence of the representatives from the City of Philadelphia in the state legislature to the detriment of more rural areas.[27] The rule agreed to by the Pennsylvania legislature that there was to be no compensation for the delegates to the Constitutional Convention worked against rural delegates living great distances from the city and conversely worked in favor of those more aristocratic delegates nearer the city.[28]

Third, Antifederalists argued for more and frequent elections. The idea was to have the government close to the people and prevent isolation of the people from their governmental representatives. For this reason, the Antifederalists also favored the rotation of governmental offices.[29]

Fourth, Antifederalists objected to the representation in the proposed House of Representatives. The membership in such a House

was judged to be too small to ensure adequate representation. To the Antifederalist, adequate representation implied an equality of representation from all classes and professions. Balance was to be the key here and this, it was thought, would help to preclude representation by natural aristocracy. The formula of one representative for every 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants derived at the Convention was judged inadequate by Antifederalist standards. As Richard Henry Lee argued, ". . . It is deceiving a people to tell them they are electors, and can chuse their legislators, if they cannot, in the nature of things, chuse men from among themselves, and genuinely like themselves."[30]

There were other Antifederalist objections to the Constitution such as the absence of a Bill of Rights. Since such a bill was included in amendment form to the Constitution, it is perhaps too commonly thought that this action detracts from the Antifederalist argument. However, the major Antifederalist claims concerning participatory democracy still stand. It is important to characterize the nature of these objections. Some Antifederalists were not objecting to republican institutions per se but to the type of republican institutions agreed to at the Convention. There were areas of agreement between the Federalists and Antifederalists. Both disagreed with rule by a monarch. Both agreed to some form of representation. Both saw the need for a government with some centralizing tendencies. The question was rather over what type of government and the extent of centralizing tendencies. Some Antifederalists would probably have accepted a

representative governmental structure which ensured a greater equality of representation in the House. This would have implied a larger House with emphasis upon equality of representation by class and profession. It would have implied more frequent and competitive elections with rotation of office provisions. It would have probably also implied government with less secrecy and dispatch. This type of government could have occurred within a republican framework. All of this suggests that the two ideas of participatory and republican representative democracy need not necessarily be inimicable. There has been a tendency to view our choices here in an either or framework but reality is rarely that kind. Gray areas predominate reality simultaneously creating more options but complicating our choices.

The Contemporary Debate Revisited

In point of fact, the United States has been deeply affected by the ideas of participatory democracy. It is possible to view, ". . . United States political history . . . as a process of democratizing a republican government structure."[31] From the efforts of Thomas Jefferson to the Age of Jackson through the Progressive Reform Movement, New Deal, Civil Rights, Vietnam Protest, Women's Movement and Environmental periods, some form of participatory effort was stressed usually by Congressional mandate. Many of the Great Society programs required citizen participation. For example, the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 mobilized the poor and involved them in policy-making decisions. Other acts, like the

Coastal Zone Act and the Housing and Community Development Act required citizen participation either by legislation or regulation. Many federal legislative programs have also been amended to include citizen participation provisions.[32] As a result, citizens have been incorporated into many planning bodies across diverse fields like health, education, transportation and the environment.[33]

Upon examination, one finds in the citizen participation literature a rich diversity concerning the goals of such participation. Some participatory advocates urge the utilization of (and building upon) participatory instrumentalities from the Progressive Reform Era.[34] Others have focused their efforts on instituting participatory mechanisms for industrial use.[35] Others seek to remove the restrictions associated with majority rule constructed by the Founders.[36] Still others seek to utilize emerging communications technologies in participatory schemes that vary from establishing participatory institutions[37] to replacing these institutions or eclipsing them with direct democracy.[38] The debate therefore appears to be largely over whether to replace existing representation institutions or merely influence them.

The ideas expressed in this literature have much in common with Antifederalist arguments. Indeed, one scholar has referred to contemporary political reformers of the 1960s and 1970s as modern Antifederalists. Four themes seem to link the modern reformers with their Antifederalist counterparts. First, both expressed goals of democratizing our political structure. These reformers see participation as valid for its own sake and not a

means towards some other end. Second, while both are portrayed as radical, they are perhaps best viewed as liberal reformers committed to systemic values such as the rule of law. Third, both were deeply suspicious of capitalism, but the emphasis of at least the contemporary activists has been on reforming the system not eliminating it. Fourth, there is a hostility towards special interests which the Antifederalists would have termed privileged interests.[39] As Brand notes:

> When the four principles that animated reform in the 1960s and 1970s were combined, they impelled reformers beyond narrowly conceived piecemeal reforms. Indeed, the conjunction of direct democracy, legal formalism, suspicion of capitalism, and suspicion of interest group politics posits a fundamentally different political system than established by the American Framers in 1789.[40]

Perhaps the present system can best be characterized as one emphasizing representative institutions tinged with democratic measures. The debate concerning the methods for strengthening our governmental structure and process illustrates this mixture.

During the Bicentennial year, the Committee on the Constitutional System was formed to examine the problems facing government and to propose solutions in the form of reforms. Generally, the Committee found the problem of divided government ending in policy deadlock to be the one overriding problem facing the United States in the near future. They proposed a number of reforms aimed at alleviating the problem. Many of these reforms

were in the form of constitutional amendments but others were suggested federal statutes and party rule changes. Table one summarizes these proposals.[41]

These proposals touched off a debate with striking similarities to the one during the Constitutional ratification period. For example, critics of the committee argued that the

TABLE ONE

Proposals of the Committee on the Constitutional System

I. Constitutional Amendments
   A. To solve primarily the problem of divided government
      1. Coordinated terms of office for elected members of the executive and legislative branches would be established;
      2. Presidential and congressional candidates would run as a team on a political party slate;
      3. The party electing the President would receive bonus seats in the Senate and House;
      4. Members of the Senate and House would be eligible to fill offices in the executive branch;
      5. The President would have the power to appoint cabinet secretaries to the Senate and House;
      6. The two-term limit on the presidency (twenty-second amendment) would be repealed.
   B. To solve primarily the problem of deadlock
      1. The President and Congress would have the power to issue a proclamation or resolution of no confidence which would result in special elections for President and all members of Congress;
      2. Provisions would be made for a national referendum;
      3. The one house override would be available to House and SENATE;
      4. The President would be empowered with the item veto;
      5. Congress would be empowered with the legislative veto;
      6. Treaty ratification would occur by a reduced majority.
II. Federal Statutes to Reform the Electoral System
      1. Two phase federal elections would be established in which the President would be elected four weeks prior to Congress;
      2. Candidates for federal office would have the option to run on party slates;
      3. Public financing of campaign broadcasts would be provided;

III. Party Rules to Reform the Electoral System
1. Restrictions would be placed on campaign expenditures;
2. Bicameral nominating conventions would divide delegates to national conventions into a popular and a congressional chamber.

SOURCE: Jeanne Hahn, "Neohamiltonianism; A Democratic Critique," in John F. Manley and Kenneth M. Dolbeare, eds., The Case Against the Constitution: From Antifederalist to the Present (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1987), pp. 147-48.

first three proposed constitutional amendments would have the effect of diminishing third party movements. Since there were no proposals concerning the single member districts, the winner-take-all representation model, a competitive multiparty system would be discouraged. The same could be said of the federal statutes aimed at coupling federal candidates to party slates, encouraging public financing of campaign broadcasts which could be construed to restrict third party efforts and changes in the congressional campaign finance laws that would distribute contributions only to the two established parties.[42] Generally, modern Antifederalists favor widening the representative institutions for debate. As Jeanne Hahn argues concerning the committee's proposals:

> As for the Committee's professed twin goals of efficiency and accountability, the first would be achieved with a vengeance. Once in place, the package would work to purify parties, to make them more internally homogeneous and like-minded, and to muffle the voice of those groups that had begun to be heard for the first time. . . .
>
> It would be a very efficient government indeed. But accountable to whom? Certainly not the people, from whom it

would be largely insulated. The people are excluded from the proposed process except in their role as atomized voters -- disciplined or required by constitutional directive, to vote a party slate.[43]

The committee's proposals were viewed as Hamiltonian in nature by the critics. Given the nature of this contemporary debate, we now must ask if there might be a way to fuse the participatory ideals of Antifederalism with republican institutions like political parties.

Towards a Fusion: Strong But Participatory Political Parties

In his thought-provoking work, The Party's Just Begun, Professor Larry J. Sabato correctly notes that political parties are stronger than conventional wisdom would have us believe. He wishes to encourage this trend for as he notes in a world without parties special interests, PACs, wealthy and celebrity candidates, incumbents, the news media and political consultants would all gain in political prominence.[44] In this type of a world, Antifederalist ideals would surely suffer. Professor Sabato provides an agenda for strong party renewal comprised of actions initiated by the parties and those initiated with the aid of government-assisted reforms.

Under these proposals, parties would engage more in education, policy formulation and provide more tangible and material services to members. They would offer campaign services to party

candidates. Sabato also advocates an expansion of party fund raising with greater efforts to recruit party volunteers and candidates. Government-assisted reforms aimed at strengthening political parties include: deregulation of parties, an emphasis upon conventions and caucuses with fewer primaries, provisions for public financing along with a party role in this financing, provisions for free radio and TV time, changes in federal election laws, reinstitution of a universal straight party lever, universal party registration, consolidation of elections and government structure to increase the coattail effect and strengthen governorships, an increase in patronage, prohibitions on primary losers launching elections bids as incumbents.[45]

Modern Antifederalists would, no doubt, raise concerns similar to those raised against the suggested proposals by the Committee on the Constitutional System. Under many of Sabato's proposals, for example, there would be a debilitating effect upon third party movements. Although one, perhaps, can argue that strengthened parties may attract previously non-participating citizens because party activity will become more worthwhile and relevant, active participation of the people in important party deliberations such as policy formulation seems to be negligible. Yet, Sabato's observations about a world without parties can be frightening. There may be a way to fuse the best Jeffersonian notions of citizen participation with Sabato's proposals concerning strong political parties. We should note that this attempt to fuse participatory functions on to republican political party structures will not

please all modern Antifederalists or dedicated republicans. It will not address the problem of third parties and single member districts, but it can lead to a more open, decentralized and participatory two-party system, and this should do for a start.

The belief behind strong participatory political parties stems from Jefferson. As James MacGregor Burns notes:

> . . . Jefferson -- believed that virtue must be nurtured at the bottom, among the "little republics" of states, where as he wrote later, "every man is a sharer in the direction of his ward -- republic, or of some of the higher ones, and feels that he is a participator in the government of affairs, not merely at an election one day in the year, but every day; where there shall not be a man in the state who will not be a member of some one of its councils, great or small, he will let the heart be torn out of his body sooner than his power wrested from him by a Caesar or Bonaparte."[46]

With this spirit in mind Robert Dahl, in his work, Controlling Nuclear Weapons, suggests one possible participatory institution that would possess educational and equality of representation functions. The goal is to develop a body of competent citizens able to make adequately enlightened judgments about public issues or the terms for delegation of authority. This institution which we term a citizen's assembly (Dahl terms minipopulus) would insure a broad dissemination of information on the issues to all members of the Assembly. All citizens would be provided with opportunities to be heard on the issues. For these ends, the Assembly could

utilize interactive communications technologies to aid in the questioning of government officials, expressing citizen preference, and debating the issues. Dahl has also advocated random selection of citizens to establish a greater equality of representation.[47] His focus was on a national Citizen's Assembly of about 1,000 people. A variation of this idea was put into practice by the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies during the Fall of 1988. The purpose was to convene citizen's assemblies across the nation and forge a citizen's agenda for the new President. The effort met with some success.[48] Arguments have been advanced for the establishment of citizen assemblies at the state level[49] and at other levels of local government.[50] While Dahl originally envisioned these efforts as an addition to republican institutions, other Antifederalists would view these assemblies as replacements for current institutions.[51] These assemblies could also be utilized within the framework of political parties to increase party representation and thus add to party strength.

One of the problems concerning modern political parties is the relationship of the rank and file membership with the party leadership. In both parties, there seems to be a gap between leadership and member ideology. This creates problems for the direction or public policy stands of the party. The Republican Party leadership appears to be more conservative than its membership, and the Democrat Party leaders are more liberal than the rank and file members. Indeed, the problems regarding the Southern wing of the Democratic Party are becoming legendary.[52] A

political party sponsored citizen's assembly could help alleviate this problem. Such an assembly could be initiated by the leadership of the party at any level, local, state or national. Participation in the assembly could be fixed either by random invitation of members from party lists or simply by invitation alone. These efforts should be geared to establish the widest possible range of citizen participation in party matters. These assemblies could be construed to give a representative sample of members a role in party rules or party policy and issue formulation. They can be utilized to break party deadlocks over policy initiatives. Most importantly, they would give rank and file members an opportunity to educate themselves in party affairs. Membership in the assembly would have a fixed time period and members could not serve for a set period of time after their initial tenure. This would guarantee the rotation of membership that Antifederalists championed. Thus, both Jeffersonian goals of participation and enlightened education would be fulfilled. Furthermore, the party most adept at mobilizing not only its rank and file members but also attracting significant numbers of independents into the party fold could reap electoral rewards. Public opinion polling of party members could be utilized to determine the most salient issues or concerns of party members. The duration, structure, and work schedule of the assembly could be determined by the leadership of the party perhaps in conjunction with a commission of rank and file, randomly selected members. Finally, a portion of public finance money (if established)

dedicated to such assemblies could hasten their initiation.

A party sponsored citizen's assembly would seem to possess a number of advantages. Since it would, by its constitution, be more representative than current party structures, it could provide a voice for old and new members that they would not otherwise have. This might lead to an increase of intra party comity. While parties have established formal policy committees, councils and think tanks, a distinction between these groups and citizen assemblies is the broader representational base for the assemblies.[53] These assemblies could provide an enlightened and more educated party membership willing to devote time to party business and electoral tasks. This might lead to the establishment of continuous parties that do not disappear between elections. It could thus aid in candidate recruitment as party members rose within the ranks of the assembly or otherwise distinguished themselves. In addition, such an assembly could foster a new sense of volunteerism by members that might reach beyond the electoral cycles. It could provide an increase in party patronage power especially when coupled with the support services such an institution will require. It might ensure greater representation of the rank and file membership in party caucuses and conventions. It might increase the pool of contributors and the level of their contributions. In addition, the importance of parties could be conveyed to the general public because of the inevitable media attention devoted to these assemblies. Finally, parties could compete more effectively with highly financed special interests

ensuring a more open and competitive electoral system.

The existence of party sponsored citizen assemblies would take the harsh edge off of many proposals aimed at rejuvenating political parties. The task is to combine strength with greater representation and participation fusing republican and Antifederalist ideals. The result might be enhanced party prestige and status. Without such an effort, moves to strengthen political parties will inevitably suffer from charges of party elitism leading to a continuity of political party decline and the world which Sabato so justifiably fears.

Conclusion

A variety of Progressive reforms have been instituted since the early twentieth century. These reforms have included the direct primary; the initiative, referendum, and recall; and nonpartisan elections at the local level. The reforms were defended as devices which would increase citizen participation in political party activity. The effect of these reforms has been the weakening of political parties and the perpetuation of mutual exclusivity between citizen participation and party government.

The premise of this mutual exclusivity argument has its origin in the Constitutional ratification debates between the Federalists and Antifederalists. Recently, these debates have been revisited in the proposals for reform by the Committee on the Constitutional System and the reactions of critics to these proposals.

The proposition presented herein is that a means exists for

the fusing of participation with the political party in such a way as to strengthen the party. The device advocated for enhancing political party strength is a citizen assembly called to give continuing input into the positions to be taken by the party. Additional advantages to the party of a practical nature include assistance provided by the citizen assembly in the party's recruitment of members, leaders, and money.

We hold no illusions concerning this proposal. The late poet Robert Frost once remarked that the middle of the road is where the white line is painted and that's the most dangerous place to drive. We choose to drive here. Why? We do not, at this time, see any realistic alternative. We fully understand that this proposal will be opposed by some strong party advocates as chimerical, unrealistic, naive, unworkable and costly. Yet some of these same adjectives can be utilized, to describe reforms aimed at strengthening political parties such as PAC reform, free radio and TV time, congressional action to neutralize the Supreme Court's decision in Buckley v. Valeo. Furthermore, movement towards these ends will be met with strong anti-party feeling that has always existed in this nation. This leads us to conclude that without significant and meaningful involvement of the people, political parties will continue to decline in electoral influence.

On the other hand, there are those who would actively hope for such a decline and suggest that we are bolstering decaying institutions of bygone days. Some modern Antifederalists would tear down our two-party system and rebuild it perhaps along the

lines of a parliamentary form of government with a competitive multi-party system. We sympathize with them. However, we do not see strong active movement towards the elimination of single-member districts and the institution of proportional representation which would facilitate such ends. Furthermore, efforts towards these ends will be opposed by the current party system. These parties may be weak, but they can still wage a powerful defensive battle for their very existence. Alas, we are in the middle of the road, we think, with some justification.

ENDNOTES

1. For a discussion of the long-term effects of the direct primary on political parties see, David B. Truman, "Party Reform, Party Atrophy and Constitutional Change," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 99, No. 4 (Winter 1984-85), pp. 647-50.
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3. V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups, 4th Ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1958), pp. 194-95.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. See, for example, David E. Price, Bringing Back the Parties (Washington: CQ Press, 1984), p. 101; Frank J. Sorauf and Paul Allen Beck, Party Politics in America, 6th Ed. (Boston: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1988), pp. 217, 224, and 244-45; Richard L. Kolbe, American Political Parties: An Uncertain Future (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 140; and L. Sandy Maisel, Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process (New York: Random House, 1987), pp. 42-43.
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20. Lundberg, p. 157.
21. For an exposition of Hamilton's ideas see, Federalist #35 in Rossiter, Ed., pp. 211-17.

22. Kenneth M. Dolbeare and Linda Medcalf, "The Dark Side of the Constitution" in John F. Manley and Kenneth M. Dolbeare, eds., The Case Against the Constitution (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1987), p. 121.
23. Rossiter, Ed., p. 360.
24. See, for example, the argument of Lloyd N. Cutler, "Political Parties and a Workable Government" in Burke Marshall, Ed., A Workable Government: The Constitution After 200 Years (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987), pp. 49-58.
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26. See, for example, "The Addresses and Reasons of Dissent of the Minority of the Convention of Pennsylvania to Their Constituents" in Manley and Dolbeare, Eds., p. 74.
27. For a discussion of the Pennsylvania reaction to the proposed Constitution see, Catherine D. Bowen, Miracle at Philadelphia (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1986), p. 273-5.
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